

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 103

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 108

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 103—Relative to California/El Salvador relations.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 11, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 103, De León. California and El Salvador: election.

This measure would commend the government of El Salvador on its handling of the recent election and would recognize the efforts of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and other institutions in assisting with the election in the spirit of the Chapultepec Peace Accords.

WHEREAS, The Legislature of the State of California is committed to recognizing democratic governments in their efforts to develop policies that support the rule of law and the long-term economic growth and shared prosperity of all members of society; and

WHEREAS, El Salvador and California have long shared common interests and each stand to benefit from increased trade, investment, and tourism, as well as cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges; and

WHEREAS, The 12-year Salvadoran Civil War, which began in the early 1980s, took the lives of over 75,000 Salvadorans, resulted in a displacement of over 500,000 people, and was concluded with the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico City in 1992; and

WHEREAS, El Salvador's peace settlement, as summarized by the United States Institute of Peace, provided for a cease-fire, the demobilization of military and guerrilla forces, the establishment of the rebel Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) as a political party, and the reintegration of its combatants into society. The Chapultepec Peace Accords further committed the government to making changes in the nature, responsibilities, and size of the country's Armed Forces, creating a new national civilian police force and an intelligence service separate from the military, implementing human rights measures, adopting electoral and judicial reforms, and providing limited social and economic programs primarily benefiting members of the demobilized forces and war-ravaged communities; and

WHEREAS, A majority of Salvadorans fleeing the civil war came to the United States, with most coming to Los Angeles and San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, The City of Los Angeles, a sister city to San Salvador, is home to the largest concentration of Salvadoran nationals in the United States, making it inextricably linked to the nation of El Salvador; and

WHEREAS, Of the 1.6 million Salvadorans who live in the United States, more than 500,000 call California home. Salvadorans constitute the second largest Latino community in California, and live in major cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, The state's 22nd Senate District encompasses the neighborhoods of Pico-Union and Westlake, where many Salvadoran refugees settled during the Salvadoran Civil War and is also home to a plaza and statue in commemoration of the humanitarian Monsignor Oscar A. Romero in MacArthur Park; and

WHEREAS, The California Legislature supports actions that would strengthen and facilitate mutually beneficial exchanges in cities like sister cities Los Angeles and San Salvador; and

WHEREAS, March 24, 2014, was a special occasion, as it marked the 34th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Monsignor Oscar A. Romero, whose tomb President Obama visited on March 23, 2011; and

WHEREAS, Monsignor Romero is a historical icon of the Salvadoran people, and in that spirit, the State of California joins President Obama, the City of Los Angeles, the Salvadoran community, the government of El Salvador, and millions of followers in El Salvador and around the world, in paying tribute to his life and teachings; and

WHEREAS, El Salvador recently held a presidential election on March 9, 2014, that according to international observers, including the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations, and hundreds of United States citizens, was free and democratic, and for which the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) was praised, for the election's transparency and professionalism; and

WHEREAS, The State of California joins the United Nations, international observers, the OAS, and many civil and religious organizations in recognizing the work of the TSE, the commitment of the two major political parties to respect the will of the people as demonstrated by the March 9th election, and the final outcome announced by the TSE as the legal mandate under the Salvadoran Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Addressing the socioeconomic issues that long fomented civil unrest in El Salvador prior to the civil war, and which were again brought to the forefront in the global recession in 2009, will take time and a consistent commitment by the Salvadoran government to build an equitable economic environment that supports the efforts of workers and the middle class to prosper and benefit from the nation's economic growth. To this end, the State of California can serve as an important economic partner with the newly democratically elected government of El Salvador, and President Salvador Sánchez Cerén, in promoting trade and private investment in both El Salvador and California; and

WHEREAS, The United States prospered from a \$692.6 million trade surplus with El Salvador in 2013; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature, on behalf of the people of the State of California, commends the Salvadoran people for their high turnout in the

election, as well as the state institutions for their professional handling of the election process. California looks forward to a positive and cooperative relationship with Salvadorans living in California and with President Sánchez Cerén and his government as they continue to forge new policies and take actions that promote democratic institutions, the rule of law, and economic opportunity and growth for all Salvadorans, in the spirit of the Chapultepec Peace Accords; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President of El Salvador, to the Governor of California, and to the author for appropriate distribution.